

these retirement coverage errors. Moreover, the measure gives those affected a choice between corrected retirement coverage and the coverage the employee expected to receive, without disturbing Social Security coverage law.

Similar legislation was offered in 1998, and my colleague, the chairman of the Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation, and Federal Services, held a hearing on the measure at which officials from the Office of Personnel Management and the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board testified in support of the bill.

I believe this measure addresses the concerns of federal workers who have been placed in the wrong retirement system. It offers a workable and reasonable solution, and I ask my colleagues to support this legislation. I also wish to note that S. 1232 enjoys the support of the Office of Personnel Management and the two largest federal employee unions, the American Federation of Government Employees and the National Treasury Employees Union, that are encouraged by the bipartisan effort that went into crafting this bill.

GUN CRIME COMMITTED BY 18 TO 20 YEAR OLDS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, this week, Vice President GORE released a new study focusing on the connection between young adults and gun crimes. This report, jointly prepared by the Departments of Treasury and Justice, documents an alarmingly high rate of gun violence among 18 to 20 year olds.

The report shows that while 18, 19, and 20 years olds make up only 4 percent of the U.S. population, they commit an astounding 24 percent of gun murders in our country. In addition, the report shows that 18 year olds commit 35 percent more gun murders than 21 year olds; double the gun murders of 24 year olds; triple the gun murders of 28 year olds; and four times the gun murders of 30 year olds.

There are several loopholes in our current firearms laws that permit young people access to handguns and other deadly weapons. We must close those loopholes, especially for the 18 to 20 year olds, who contribute to such a high percentage of gun crimes. One of those loopholes allows 18 to 20 year olds, minors, to purchase handguns from unlicensed dealers, private collectors or friends, even though it would be illegal for them to purchase the same handgun from a federally licensed dealer.

There are also additional loopholes in federal law that permit 18 to 20 year olds to purchase semiautomatic weapons and large capacity ammunition feeding devices from anyone willing to sell them. These weapons, such as AK-47s and Uzis, and the 50 rounds per minute clips that accompany them, are not the type of weapons needed for hunting, they are the type needed for

killing, and that is what they are too often used for.

There is strong precedent for imposing minimum age requirements for engaging in dangerous activities. Congress and the states worked together in the past to minimize public safety concerns by ensuring that states raised their legal drinking ages to 21. This was in response to evidence that young adults were involved in proportionately far more driving accidents while intoxicated. Increasing the age requirement for drinking alcohol, reduced automobile accidents dramatically. And, in the first year after Michigan raised its drinking age from 18 to 21, there was a 21 percent decline in alcohol related deaths among drivers age 18 to 20.

Most recently, a report to be released today by a national commission studying the impact of gambling will apparently recommend that the minimum age for all forms of gambling be raised to 21. Although currently most casinos require gamblers to be 21, other forms of gambling, such as state lotteries have an age requirement of 18. The National Gambling Impact Study Commission contends that there should be tighter restrictions on state lotteries and other forms of betting because of the dangers and risks of excessive gambling.

Surely if there are clear and compelling reasons to prevent young people from drinking and gambling, there are even better reasons, as documented by the Gore report, to prevent 18, 19 and 20 year olds from owning an assault weapon or a handgun. I am a cosponsor of legislation introduced by Senator SCHUMER, S. 891, that would prohibit the sale or transfer of these weapons to young adults as well as prohibit possession of these weapons by those under 21, while maintaining exemptions under current law. In my judgment, it is critical that Congress act quickly to close these loopholes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-3781. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Matching Credit Card and Debit Card Contributions in Presidential Campaigns", received June 11, 1999; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC-3782. A communication from the Acting Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "17 CFR Part 10 Rules of Practice"; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3783. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "1999 Amendment to Cotton Board Rules and Regulations Adjusting Supplemental Assessment on Imports—Final Rule"

(Docket Number: CN-99-002), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3784. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Raisins produced from Grapes Grown in California; Final Free and Reserve Percentages for 1998-99 Zante Currant Raisins" (Docket Number: FV-99-989-3 FIR), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3785. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Tart Cherries Grown in the States of Michigan, et al.; Revision of the Sampling Techniques for Whole Block and Partial Block Diversions and Increasing the Number of Partial Block Diversions Per Season for Tart Cherries" (Docket Number: FV-99-930-2 FIR), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3786. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Regulatory Analysis and Development, Policy and Program Development, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Horses from Australia and New Zealand; Quarantine Requirements" (Docket Number: 98-069-2), received June 15, 1999; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3787. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulations Management, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Schedule for Rating Disabilities; Fibromyalgia" (RIN2900-AH05), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-3788. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulations Management, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Veterans Education: Increase in Educational Assistance Rates" (RIN2900-AJ37), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-3789. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Single Family Mortgage Insurance; Informed Consumer Choice Disclosure Notice" (FR-4411) (RIN2502-AH30), received June 15, 1999; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3790. A communication from the Executive Director, Federal Labor Relations Authority, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Equal Access to Justice Act Attorney Fees Regulations", received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3791. A communication from the Acting Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Effective Date of Application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits" (RIN0960-AE71), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3792. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Notice 99-36, Charitable Split-Dollar Transactions" (Notice 99-36), received June 14, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3793. A communication from the Rules Administrator, Federal Bureau of Prisons,

Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Correspondence: Return Address" (RIN1120-AA69), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-3794. A communication from the Rules Administrator, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Prison Industries (FPI) Inmate Work Programs: Eligibility" (RIN1120-AA57), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-3795. A communication from the Military Personnel Management Specialist, Headquarters Air Force Personnel Center, Department of the Air Force, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Rule 32-National Defense-Part 881-Determination of Active Military Service for Civilians or Contractual Groups," received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3796. A communication from the Director, Defense Procurement, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Congressional Medal of Honor" (DFARS Case 98-D304), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3797. A communication from the Executive Director, Committee for Purchase from People who are Blind or Severely Disabled, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Additions to and Deletions from the Procurement List," received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-3798. A communication from the General Services Administration, the Department of Defense, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting jointly, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Acquisition Circular 97-12" (FAC 97-12), received June 11, 1999; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-3799. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Allied Signal Inc. VN411B Very High Frequency (VHF) Navigation Receivers; Docket No. 95-CE-91 (6-11/6-14)" (RIN2120-AA64) (1999-0246), received June 14, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3800. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Flight Crewmember Flight Time Limitations and Rest Requirements; Notice of Enforcement Policy" (RIN2120-ZZ19), received June 14, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3801. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Raytheon Aircraft Company Beech Models 45 (YT-34), 45 (T-34A, B-45), and D45 (T-34B) Airplanes; Request for Comments; July 9, 1999 (6-14/6-14)" (RIN2120-AA64) (1999-0242), received June 14, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3802. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Raytheon Aircraft Company Model 1900D Airplanes; Docket No. 98-CE-127 (6-11/6-14)" (RIN2120-AA64) (1999-0244), received June 14, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3803. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Boeing Model 737-200C Series Airplanes; Docket No. 98-NM-273" (RIN2120-AA64) (1999-0245), received June 14, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3804. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: The New Piper Aircraft Inc. Models PA-31, PA-31-300, PA-31-325, PA-31-350, and PA-31P-350 Airplanes; Docket No. 97-CE-32 (6-14/6-14)" (RIN2120-AA64) (1999-0243), received June 14, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3805. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: International Aero Engines AG V2500-A1 and V2500-A5 Series Turbofan Engines; Request for Comments; Docket No. 99-NE-37 (6-15/6-14)" (RIN2120-AA64) (1999-0241), received June 14, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3806. A communication from the Chief, Office of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Incorporations by Reference for Alternate Compliance Program (ACP) (USCG-1999-5004)" (RIN2115-AF74), received June 14, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3807. A communication from the Chief, Office of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety/Security Zone Regulations; New York Super Bowl Race, Hudson River, New York (CGD01-98-175)" (RIN2115-AA97) (1999-0029), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3808. A communication from the Chief, Office of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety/Security Zone Regulations; 4th of July Fireworks, Charles River Esplanade, Boston, MA (CGD01-98-057)" (RIN2115-AA97) (1999-0028), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3809. A communication from the Chief, Office of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridge Regulations; Fort Point Channel, MA (CGD01-98-173)" (RIN2115-AE47) (1999-0021), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3810. A communication from the Chief, Office of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regatta Regulations; SLR; Riverbend Festival, Tennessee River Mile 463.5 to 464.5, Chattanooga, TN (CGD08-99-037)" (RIN2115-AE46) (1999-0023), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3811. A communication from the Chief, Office of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to

law, the report of a rule entitled "Regatta Regulations; SLR; Riverfest '99, Tennessee River Mile Marker 140.0 to 141.0, Parsons, TN (CGD08-99-038)" (RIN2115-AE46) (1999-0022), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3812. A communication from the Chief, Office of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regatta Regulations; SLR; Hampton Offshore Challenge, Chesapeake Bay, Hampton, Virginia (CGD05-99-038)" (RIN2115-AE46) (1999-0019), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3813. A communication from the Chief, Office of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regatta Regulations; SPL; Independence Day Celebration, Cumberland River Mile 190.0-191.0, Nashville, TN (CGD08-99-036)" (RIN2115-AE46) (1999-0020), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3814. A communication from the Chief, Office of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regatta Regulations; SLR; Sharptown Outboard Regatta, Nanticoke River, Sharptown, Maryland (CGD05-99-037)" (RIN2115-AE46) (1999-0021), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3815. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment to Class E Airspace; Anaktuvuk Pass, AK; Correction; Docket No. 99-AAL-42 (6-16/6-17)" (RIN2120-AA66) (1999-0202), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3816. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision of Class E Airspace; Shawnee, OK; Direct Final Rule; Confirmation of Effective Date; Docket No. 99-ASW-07 (6-17/6-17)" (RIN2120-AA66) (1999-0201), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3817. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision of Class E Airspace; Lake Charles, LA; Direct Final Rule; Confirmation of Effective Date; Docket No. 99-ASW-04 (6-17/6-17)" (RIN2120-AA66) (1999-0199), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3818. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision of Class E Airspace; Guthrie, OK; Direct Final Rule; Confirmation of Effective Date; Docket No. 99-ASW-06 (6-17/6-17)" (RIN2120-AA66) (1999-0198), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3819. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Bell Helicopter

Textron Canada (BHTC) Model 206L-4 Helicopters; Request for Comments; Docket No. 98-SW-66 (6-17/6-17)" (RIN2120-AA64) (1999-0247), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3820. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Eurocopter France Model AS 32C, L, L1, and L2 Helicopters; Request for Comments; Docket No. 99-SW-17 (6-17/6-17)" (RIN2120-AA64) (1999-0248), received June 17, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3821. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Closure of the Gulf of Alaska to Directed Fishing for Pollock in Statistical Area 610," received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3822. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Closure of Statistical Area 620, Gulf of Alaska, to Directed Fishing for Pollock," received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3823. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Closure to Directed Fishing for Pacific Cod by Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Offshore Component in the Western Regulatory Area in the Gulf of Alaska," received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3824. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Using Pot Gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands," received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3825. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulations Regarding the Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Power Plant Operations" (RIN0648-AK00), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3826. A communication from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Northeastern United States-Final Rule to Implement Framework Adjustment 29 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan and Framework Adjustment 11 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan" (RIN0648-AM24), received June 16, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first

and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. BURNS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. INOUE):

S. 1242. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to make permanent the visa waiver program for certain visitors to the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FRIST:

S. 1243. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to revise and extend the prostate cancer preventive health program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THOMPSON (for himself, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. KERREY, and Mr. BREAU):

S. 1244. A bill to establish a 3-year pilot project for the General Accounting Office to report to Congress on economically significant rules of Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. GREGG, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. MACK, Mr. DODD, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. ROBB, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. GORTON, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. CAMPBELL, and Mr. THURMOND:

S. Res. 125. A resolution encouraging and promoting greater involvement of fathers in their children's lives and designating June 20, 1999, as "National Father's Return Day"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. Con. Res. 41. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the treatment of religious minorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and particularly the recent arrests of members of that country's Jewish community; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. BURNS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. INOUE):

S. 1242. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to make permanent the visa waiver program for certain visitors to the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I am introducing a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to make permanent the visa waiver program for certain visitors to the United States.

The visa waiver program has been an unprecedented success in reducing barriers to travel and tourism to and from the United States. The program allows a citizen of a participating country to forego visa application at a U.S. consulate abroad, and allows them to travel to the U.S. for business or pleasure

and make application for entry directly to the INS at a port of entry. To use this privilege, an applicant agrees to waive rights to challenge the decision of the INS inspector, and agrees to depart the U.S. within 90 days. More than 10 million visitors used the visa waiver program in fiscal year 1995. This represents 76 percent of the total number of non-immigrant entries by citizens of visa waiver countries. Visitors entering under the visa waiver program accounted for just under 50 percent of all temporary business and tourist entries.

In the ten years since the implementation of the visa waiver program, international visitors have become accustomed to the program's requirements, and use it routinely. The program has effectively served the purpose for which it was designed, to facilitate the efficient flow of low-risk foreign tourists and business travelers. Simultaneously, the program has afforded Department of State consular officers more time to focus efforts on individuals who visit the U.S. for other purposes, such as employment or study, or those who intend to remain in the U.S. for extended periods. Further, it has allowed the Department of State to drastically reduce its consular staff at low-risk locations, and strengthen efforts in high risk locations. Yet, all this pales in comparison to the real benefit of the visa waiver program, that of expanded foreign travel and tourism to the U.S. Put simply, the U.S. needs this program to remain competitive with the many other nations around the globe who are competing for the finite pool of business travelers and tourists.

In 1996, the World Tourism Organization reported that the United States was the second most popular international tourist destination and the number one location for tourism expenditures. Of the 44.8 million arrivals that year, 12.4 million entered under the visa waiver program. International tourism in the U.S. is a \$65 billion enterprise which boosts the economies of many local communities.

In my home state of Hawaii, tourism is an \$11 billion industry which generates about one-quarter of the state's tax revenue and one-third of its jobs. It is estimated that 80 percent of all international visitors arriving at Honolulu International Airport arrive under the visa waiver program. We know that the visa waiver program has been very successful because it provides a big boost for Japanese visitors to travel to Hawaii. Our long-term goal for a permanent visa waiver program would be to expand participation of the program in the Asia-Pacific region. Currently, most of the 26 eligible countries are in Europe. Only four of these countries are in the Asia-Pacific region—Australia, Japan, Brunei, and New Zealand. We hope that South Korea and China will be future participants in an expanded program.

While the pilot program has been extended periodically since its inception,